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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQ: IRAQI STUDY GROUP, SECTARIAN VIOLENCE; SAO PAULO

"Iraq Runs The Risk Of Territorial Split"

Business-oriented Valor Economico (10/24) editorialized: "The Iraqi civil war has begun to outline a geographic split and disintegrate the nation into Shiite, Sunni and Kurd enclaves.... There are confrontations everywhere, forcing the migration of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis looking for protection of their communities.... Nuri al Maliki's Shiite government has become incapable of controlling anything.... Without disarming the militia, the Iraqi state has no means of survival.... This is far from happening despite the US reiterated hopes of a quick improvement of the situation. On the contrary, what one can see is an acute deterioration of the political condition and of the people's life. The intensification of violence has cost President George W. Bush dearly. The Republicans, who run the risk of losing the majority in both the House and the Senate, have shown increasing dissatisfaction. Apparently Bush does not have a B plan to face the situation and is resisting pressures to establish a deadline to withdraw US troops.... Another possibility, that is gaining support in Washington, is to yield to the uncontrollable wave of violence and accept the division of Iraq among Shiites, Kurds and Sunnis, as a congressional committee co-chaired by former Secstate James Baker suggested.... To ratify such a situation would be an open admission of total defeat of the US plans for Iraq as well as a recipe for chaos.... Such a scenario has tragic similarities with the Lebanese civil war, and nothing good can be expected from it.... The political momentum for Bush to increase the number of soldiers in Iraq is already over, and he will hardly try to do that. On the other hand, however, to withdraw the troops would be a shameful bloodshed.... Once opened, there is no means to close the Iraqi Pandora's Box."

McMullen